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Wilson Associate Indicted Over Exports to Libya

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A federal grand jury in Alexandria yesterday indicted a Canadian business associate of former CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson on charges of exporting night vision equipment to Libya without a license.

Robert A. Manina, a former top official of an Ottawa-based electronics firm, is charged in the indictment with shipping a low-light-level television camera with a silicon intensifier tube to Canada in August 1977 and then to Libya without obtaining the required export licenses from the U. S. State Department.

Manina, who has been living in Ireland, could be sentenced to up to two years in prison and fined up to \$100,000 if convicted. He was general manager from 1976 to 1979 of Marsland Engineering in Waterloo, Ontario, a subsidiary of Leigh Instruments Ltd. of Ottawa. Reached by phone last night at his home in Galloway, Ireland, he said he "was under the impression that no laws had been broken." He declined further comment until he receives official notification of the charges and consults an attorney. Officials of the company could not be reached for comment.

Manina, who moved to Ireland in 1979 to work for the firm's branch there, told reporters last year that the company won a contract in 1976 to supply night vision equipment to Libya but that it was intended for civilian use in protecting Libyan oil fields. Sources familiar with the federal investigation into Wilson's activities say the equipment was used by the Libyan military.

Prosecutors declined yesterday to say who sold the equipment to Manina. One prosecutor said steps will be taken to extradite him if he fails to answer the indictment, which was returned three days before the five-year statute of limitations expired.

Manina also told reporters last year that he and Wilson, who is in federal custody on charges he supplied explosives, electronic timers and terrorist training to the Libyan regime of Col. Muammar Qaddafi, had a "falling out" at some point during the course of the contract, which provided for the shipment of at least a truckload of equipment to Libya. Investigators familiar with the case have said the dispute was over money.

In May 1979, Manina's Jaguar automobile was blown up in the driveway of his home in Kitchener, Ontario. Canadian officials have obtained a warrant charging a former Wilson employee, Eugene Tafoya, in the incident. Tafoya is a former Green Beret who worked for Wilson in Libya and who was convicted last year of an October 1980 assault on an exiled Qaddafi opponent in Fort Collins, Colo.

Canadian officials said yesterday they are seeking to extradite Tafoya, who is free on an appeal bond and living in New Mexico, to stand trial on the firebombing charge.

Tafoya, who was scheduled to appear last week before a federal grand jury in Denver investigating Wilson's ties to the shooting in Fort Collins, subsequently refused to testify, according to sources in Denver.